CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An electronic device comprising:

a housing having a plurality of housing segments;

a plurality of modules, each module being encased in one of the housing segments;

a sensor to detect an orientation of the electronic device; and

a selection mechanism to automatically select at least one, but not all, of the plurality of modules to be active, based on the detected orientation of the electronic device.

2. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of modules has a set of user-interface features that can be at least partially controlled by the selection mechanism, and wherein the selection mechanism enables the set of user-interface features of the at least one selected module to be operational.

3. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the housing has a first housing segment and a second housing segment, the first housing segment having a first exterior panel that provides a first set of user-interface features, the second housing segment having a second exterior panel that provides a second set of user-interface features, and wherein the selection mechanism selects one of the first and second set of user-interface features to be operational.

4. The electronic device of claim 3, wherein the first exterior panel opposes the second exterior panel.

5. The electronic device of claim 3, wherein the sensor determines whether the first exterior panel or the second exterior panel is positioned downward.

6. The electronic device of claim 5, wherein the sensor detects a direction of gravity.

7. The electronic device of claim 6, wherein the sensor is an accelerometer.

8. The electronic device of claim 3, wherein the first housing segment is detachably coupled to the second housing segment.

9. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the selection mechanism is a processor configured to enable each of the modules individually.

10. The electronic device of claim 3, wherein the first set of user-interface features includes a display and a plurality of actuatable surfaces .

11. The electronic device of claim 10, wherein the second set of user-interface features includes a display and a plurality of actuatable surfaces .

12. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the selection mechanism maintains one or more non-selected modules in an inactive state in response to the detected orientation.

13. The electronic device of claim 1, wherein the selection mechanism detects a new orientation, and selects a different module in response to the detected new orientation.

14. A method for configuring an electronic device for use, the method comprising:

detecting an orientation of the electronic device; and

selecting a first module from a plurality of modules to be operational based on the detected orientation of the electronic device.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein detecting an orientation of the electronic device includes detecting a direction of gravity.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein detecting an orientation of the electronic device is automatically in response to activating the electronic device.

17. The method of claim 14, wherein detecting an orientation of the electronic device includes detecting a downward facing module, and selecting one module from a plurality of modules includes selecting an upward facing module that opposes the downward facing module.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising maintaining a non-selected module in a non-active state until a new orientation is selected.

19. The method of claim 14, further comprising detecting a change in the orientation of the electronic device to a new orientation.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising selecting a second module different than the first module in response to detecting a change in the orientation of the electronic device.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising making the first module non-active in response to detecting a change in the orientation of the electronic device.

22. An electronic device comprising:

a first module;

a second module coupled to the first module; and

an orientation detection mechanism to select one of the first module and second modules over the other of the first and second modules based on an orientation of the electronic device.

23. The electronic device of claim 22, wherein the orientation detection mechanism includes a sensor that detects the orientation.

24. The electronic device of claim 23, wherein the orientation detection mechanism includes a processor that activates the selected module.

25. The electronic device of claim 23, wherein the orientation detection mechanism includes a processor that deactivates the selected module.

26. An electronic device comprising:

a first set of user-interface features;

a second set of user-interface features;

a detection mechanism to detect an orientation of the electronic device; and

a selection mechanism to automatically select one of the first or second set of user-interface features, based on the detected orientation of the electronic device.

27. The electronic device of claim 26, wherein the first set of user-interface features and the second set of user-interface features each include user-interface features selected from the group consisting of a display, a button, a contact-sensitive display, pre-programmed input mechanisms appearing on the contact sensitive display, a speaker, and a microphone.

28. The electronic device of claim 26, wherein the selection mechanism is a component selected from a group of components consisting of a processor, a display driver, and a switch.

29. The electronic device of claim 26, wherein the detection mechanism is a sensor capable of detecting gravity.

30. The electronic device of claim 26, wherein the first set of user-interface features is made available on a first panel, and wherein the second set of user-interface features is made available on a second panel that opposes the first panel.